# Afterlab – China Threat Theory

## Opening thoughts

This is our first afterlab – so I wanted to give a little intro.

* We have an afterlab most evenings – but not all.
* They are optional – but do tend to be popular and fun.
* They are usually the result of a student request – although we sometime select an area that we know will be popular during the season (even if it is not requested).
* It is strongly encouraged that you use the time block to pose questions in a more individualized setting.
* They are often on critical and cultural theory – mostly because the students tend to request those item (either because they find them items confusing… or because they find them fascinating).

And – most of the time – we will provide you with a word document (like this) where you can take notes and-or review evidence.

## Section One – Explaining the Kritik

### Notes (take them here)

#### Some basics about the Security Kritik:

#### Constructivism - the other major school of thought

#### The Security K – and its specific application to China (and China Threat theory):

* The four basic epistemology arg for the neg (the three basic links)

#### China-Specific authors on the Security K

#### Neg Impacts:

## Section Two - Cards and articles for the negative

### Examples of Epistemology Args when the Aff reads a card from a journalist

http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/sino-us-relations-divorce-is-not-an-option

**Oliver Turner**

**The aff’s claims that “China is a threat” influences policy formulation at every stage. The only way to achieve a coherent China foreign policy is to interrogate discourse and epistemology in policy making. The K is prior to solvency**

**Turner 13**—Oliver Turner is a Research Associate at the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester. He is the author of *American Images of China: Identity, Power, Policy* (Routledge, forthcoming) [“‘Threatening’ China and US security: the international politics of identity,” Review of International Studies, FirstView Articles, pp 1-22, Cambridge University Press 2013]

The modern day China ‘threat’ to the United States is not an unproblematic, neutrally verifiable phenomenon. It is an imagined construction of American design and the product of societal representations which, to a significant extent, have established the truth that a ‘rising’ China endangers US security. This is an increasingly acknowledged, but still relatively under-developed, concept within the literature.121 The purpose of this article has been to expose how ‘threats’ from China towards the United States have always been contingent upon subjective interpretation. The three case studies chosen represent those moments across the lifetime of Sino-US relations at which China has been perceived as most threatening to American security. The ‘threats’ emerged in highly contrasting eras. The nature of each was very different and they emerged from varying sources (broadly speaking, from immigration in the nineteenth century and from ‘great power’ rivalry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries). Yet in this way they most effectively demonstrate how China ‘threats’ have repeatedly existed as socially constructed phenomenon. Collectively they reveal the consistent centrality of understandings about the United States in perceptions of external danger. They demonstrate that, regardless of China's ability to assert material force or of the manner in which it has been seen to impose itself upon the United States, the **reality of danger can be manufactured** and made real. China ‘threats’ have always been threats to American identity so that the individual sources of ‘danger’— whether a nuclear capability or an influx of (relatively few) foreign immigrants— have never been the sole determining factors. As James Der Derian notes, danger can be ascribed to otherness wherever it may be found.122 During the mid-to-late nineteenth century and throughout the early Cold War, perceptions of China ‘threats’ provoked crises of American identity. The twenty-first-century China ‘threat’ is yet to be understood in this way but it remains inexplicable in simple material terms. As ever, the physical realities of China are important but they are **interpreted in such a way to make them threatening**, regardless of Beijing's intentions. Most importantly, this article has shown how processes of representation have been **complicit at every stage** of the formulation, enactment, and justification of **US China policy**. Their primary purpose has been to dislocate China's identity from that of the United States and introduce opportunities for action. Further, those policies themselves have reaffirmed the discourses of separation and difference which make China foreign from the United States, protecting American identity from the imagined threat. Ultimately, this analysis has sought to expose the inadequacy of approaches to the study of US China policy which privilege and centralise material forces to the extent that ideas are subordinated or even excluded. Joseph Nye argues that the China Threat Theory has the potential to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Based upon a crude hypothetical assumption that there exists a 50 per cent chance of China becoming aggressive and a 50 per cent chance of it not, Nye explains, to treat China as an enemy now effectively discounts 50 per cent of the future.123 In such way he emphasises the ideational constitution of material forces and the power of discourse to create selected truths about the world so that certain courses of action are enabled while others are precluded. Assessments such as those of Director of National Intelligence James Clapper in March 2011 should therefore not only be considered misguided, but also potentially **dangerous**. For while they appear to represent authoritative statements of fact they actually **rely upon subjective assumptions** about China and the material capabilities he describes. In late 2010 President Obama informed Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao that ‘the American people [want] to continue to build a growing friendship and strong relationship between the peoples of China and the United States’.124 The hope, of course, is that a peaceful and cooperative future can be secured. Following the announcement that the Asia Pacific is to constitute the primary focus of Washington's early twenty-first-century foreign policy strategy, American interpretations of China must be acknowledged as a central force within an increasingly pertinent relationship. The basis of their relations will always be fundamentally constituted by ideas and history informs us that particular American discourses of China have repeatedly served to construct vivid and sometimes regrettable realities about that country and its people. Crucially, it tells us that they have always been inextricable from the potentialities of US China policy. As Sino-US relations become increasingly consequential the intention must be for American representations of the PRC— and indeed Chinese representations of the United States— to become the focus of more concerted scholarly attention. Only in this way can the contours of those relations be more satisfactorily understood, so that the types of historical episodes explored in this analysis might somehow be avoided in the future.

**The AFF is an example of “China Threat” theory. It’s *not accurate* and is based on *flawed Western IR*. This only leads to violent containment policies.**

Chengxin **Pan 4**, PhD in Political Science and IR at Australian National University, “The ‘China Threat’ in American Self-Imagination: The Discursive Construction of Otheras Power Politics”, Alternatives, June-July, ebscohost

I have argued above that the "China threat" argument in mainstream U.S. IR literature is derived, primarily, from a discursive **construction of otherness**. This construction is predicated on a particular narcissistic understanding of the U.S. self and on a positivist-based realism, concerned with absolute certainty and security, a concern central to the dominant U.S. self-imaginary. Within these frameworks, it seems imperative that China be treated as a threatening, absolute other since it is unable to fit neatly into the U.S.-led evolutionary scheme or guarantee absolute security for the United States, so that U.S. power preponderance in the post-Cold War world can still be legitimated. Not only does this reductionist representation come at the expense of understanding China as a dynamic, multifaceted country but it leads inevitably to a policy of containment that, in turn, tends to enhance the influence of realpolitik thinking, nationalist extremism, and hard-line stance in today's China. Even a small dose of the containment strategy is likely to have a highly dramatic impact on U.S.-China relations, as the 1995-1996missile crisis and the 2001 spy-plane incident have vividly attested. In this respect, Chalmers Johnson is right when he suggests that "a policy of containment toward China implies the possibility of war, just as it did during the Cold War vis-a-vis the former Soviet Union. The balance of terror prevented war between the United States and the Soviet Union, but this may not work in the case of China."^^ For instance, as the United States presses ahead with a missile defence shield to "guarantee" its invulnerability from rather unlikely sources of missile attacks, it would be almost certain to intensify China's sense of vulnerability and compel it to expand its current small nuclear arsenal so as to maintain the efficiency of its limited deterrence. In consequence, **it is not impossible that the two countries**, and possibly the whole region, **might** be dragged into an escalating arms race that would eventually **make war more likely.** Neither the United States nor China is likely to be keen on fighting the other. But as has been demonstrated, the "China threat" argument, for all its alleged desire for peace and security, tends to make war preparedness the most "realistic" option for both sides. At this juncture, worthy of note is an interesting comment made by Charlie Neuhauser, a leading CIA China specialist. on the Vietnam War, a war fought by the United States to contain the then-Communist "other." Neuhauser says, "Nobody wants it. We don't want it, Ho Chi Minh doesn't want it; it's simply a question of annoying the other side."94 And, as we know, in an unwanted war some fifty-eight thousand young people from the United States and an estimated two million Vietnamese men, women, and children lost their lives. Therefore, to call for a halt to the vicious circle of theory as practice associated with the "China threat" literature, tinkering with the current positivist-dominated U.S. IR scholarship on China is no longer adequate. Rather, what is needed is to question this un-self-reflective scholarship itself, particularly its connections with the dominant way in which the United States and the West in general represent themselves and others via their positivist epistemology, so that alternative, more nuanced, and less dangerous ways of interpreting and debating China might become possible.

## Section Three – Affirmative reactions

### Section Three – Aff themes

#### “Security-Dilemma” - Action-Recycle cycles.

#### Identifying risks in China does not need to lead to neocon responses and-or containment (Friedberg)

#### Answering Pan

#### Defend your epistemology

### Friedberg ev

#### Talking about threats isn’t tied to creating Chinese containment. Refusing to consider threats is a much worse alternative.

Friedberg ‘1

(Aaron L. Friedberg, Princeton University Woodrow Wilson School Professor of Politics and International Affairs, “News Post”, Commentary, Vol. 111, No. 2, February 2001, <https://lists.lsit.ucsb.edu/archives/gordon-newspost/2001-May/001274.html>, 10/17/12, atl)

Is it possible, finally, that merely by talking and perhaps even by thinking about a full-blown SinoAmerican rivalry we may increase the probability of its actually coming to pass? This is the clear implication of Michael Swaine ’s letter. Mr. Swaine worries that “ordinary observers,” unable to distinguish between descriptions of present reality and “hair-raising scenarios” of the future, will conclude that “an intense geostrategic rivalry is virtually inevitable, and . . . respond accordingly.” While I am flattered by the thought that my article could somehow change the course of history, I very much doubt that it, or a hundred more like it, will have any such effect. On the other hand, I am disturbed by the suggestion that we ought to avoid discussing unpleasant possibilities for fear that someone (presumably our political representatives and “ordinary” fellow citizens) might get the wrong idea. Acknowledging real dangers is a necessary first step to avoiding them, as well as to preparing to cope with them if they should nevertheless come to pass. Refusing or neglecting to do so, it seems to me, is a far more likely formula for disaster.

### Strub ev

#### ( ) Representational Alt bad in the context of US-Sino affairs. It won’t trickle up and it boosts violence.

Strub ‘15

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Finally. Mitchell argues that "Embracing China's 'new model' language may, itself, thus enable otherwise unlikely pragmatic achievements," and "...that reluctance to us the phrase is largely unjustified".19 This kind of reasoning is not, in fact, a pragmatic way to approach such a crucial issue. Considering that both the United States and China have expressed the idea that confrontation between a rising power and an established power is inevitable, simply relying on optimistic rhetoric could ultimately prove quite dangerous.20 The U.S.-China relationship has not yet reached a point of trust and cooperation wherein rhetoric alone can serve as a driving force for grand strategy concerns. Terms such as "may" and "largely unjustified" fail to appreciate the importance of the relationship or the seriousness of the situation and thus fall well short of providing acceptable motivation for policy formulation. Mitchell's recommendation, while contributing significantly to the intellectual discourse on China's rise and its effect on the U.S.-China relationship, falls short when it comes to the practicality of real world implementation. Several other more pragmatic and viable approaches exist, including gradual operationalization and elevation of relations to make tangible progress toward a specified target. Agreeing to a "new model" in hopes that it eventually facilitates change merely exchanges immediate progress for the hope of future improvements. If both China and the United States are serious about this issue, an agreement should be reached on what terms will satisfactorily define a "new model," followed by the concurrent signing of commitments to these arrangements and elevation of the status of the relationship. If, on the other hand, one or neither of the actors is in fact genuinely committed to this concept, then no amount of optimistic linguistic manipulation will solve the issues confronting them. A new arrangement of "major power relations" cannot come into existence overnight merely by declaring it so. Rather, this relationship must continue to grow gradually and define itself through empirical realities as opposed to rhetorically labeling it as something new in the hopes that the act of doing so will eradicate the associated complications and produce a mutually acceptable outcome.

(When the author of this evidence references “Mitchell”, the author is responding to the following article: Ryan Mitchell. "Redefining Pragmatic Engagement: The 'New Model\* of U.S.-China Relations and the Opportunity of Shared Consequences,'\* International Affairs Review 23. no. 3 - Summer 2015: 114. <http://www.iar-gwu.org>)